

South Dakota Department of Labor  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501  
[www.sdjobs.org](http://www.sdjobs.org)

**For Immediate Release:** Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2010  
**Media Contact:** Dawn Dovre, 605.773.3094

## **State Unemployment Rate Drops Slightly; Jobs Still Limited**

**PIERRE, S.D.** – The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports South Dakota’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2009 was 4.7 percent, a reduction of 0.2 percentage points compared to the revised November 2009 rate of 4.9 percent.

“Even though the unemployment rate has gone down slightly, our economy is not in good shape,” said State Labor Secretary Pam Roberts. “Companies are still laying off workers, and there are not many job opportunities available.”

Preliminary estimates show the total, not-seasonally-adjusted nonfarm wage and salaried workers employment level in South Dakota declined by 5,900 workers from November 2009 to December 2009, which is the largest over-the-month November to December percentage reduction since 1962.

“The unemployment rate may have decreased because unemployed people got discouraged and quit looking for work,” Roberts said. “If so, they no longer are counted as part of the labor force because they are not actively seeking employment.”

The BLS seasonally adjusted labor force statistics show there were approximately 9,100 more people unemployed in December 2009 compared to December 2007, a time when a healthier South Dakota economy was reflected by a 2.7 percent unemployment rate.

“There are more people looking for work today, and they have less than half the job opportunities compared to when the South Dakota economy was booming,” said Secretary Roberts. “The job market is very tough, but some jobs are available.”

There are currently 6,313 job openings listed with the South Dakota Department of Labor (DOL). There were 9,129 job openings in January 2009 and 14,369 openings in January 2008.

DOL local offices can provide job seekers with assistance. Staff will help locate job openings, identify training opportunities, write resumes and cover letters, and practice interview techniques.

An overview of the sub-state labor market, latest data releases and snapshot of South Dakota’s economy are available through DOL’s *e-Labor Bulletin*. The next release date

is Jan. 25. The publication and information on workforce services are available at [www.sdjobs.org](http://www.sdjobs.org)